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ABSTRACT

Shared leadership among members of a home, school, and community partnership is an idealistic goal that sounds good in theory but can be very difficult to achieve. Based on a review of the literature on issues in collaboration and applied research conducted by the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, this paper examines the importance of establishing a clear planning process and the training of team members to collaborate. It also addresses the role of trained, local facilitators and the importance of resource materials to support team members as they work to share the leadership and responsibilities of bringing about change in school communities. (Contains 18 references.) (Author/MLF)

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2000 Annual AERA Meeting
New Orleans, LA
April 25, 2000

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Outline for Paper

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Support for the Shared Leadership of Collaborative Action Teams through Training of Teams, Local Facilitators and Development of Resource Materials

Shared leadership among members of a home, school, and community partnership is an idealistic goal that sounds good in theory but can be very difficult to achieve. Based upon a review of the literature on issues in collaboration and applied research conducted by the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, this paper examines the importance of establishing a clear planning process and the training of team members to collaborate. It also addresses the role of trained, local facilitators and the importance of resource materials to support team members as they work to share the leadership and responsibilities of bringing about change in school communities.

Of all the processes involved in collaborative work, strategic planning perhaps receives the greatest attention in the literature. Previous experiences of the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) in home-school-community partnerships describe systematic planning as critical to success (Molloy, et. al, 1995a). Kagan (1991) also indicates that having clear processes in place enhances collaboration. A four-stage collaborative planning process was developed in 1996 by SEDL based upon its previous work and upon a review of the literature on partnership development. This process was implemented in five school community sites, one in each of the states served by SEDL (Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas). These five sites comprise Cohort 1. The process was modified as a result of observations by SEDL staff and team member feedback and incorporated into the implementation of the process in ten additional school community sites beginning in 1998, i.e., Cohort 2. During this same year, *A Guide to Building Collaborative Action Teams in Schools and Communities* (SEDL,

unpublished) was written to assist these school communities in the development of their teams. Facilitators from each of the 15 sites were trained early in 1999 and a second facilitator training was conducted in the fall of 1999 to train additional facilitators from eight new Collaborative Action Team sites that comprise Cohort 3. Four core principles of the CAT process are: 1) representative membership, 2) shared leadership, 3) consensus decision-making, and 4) action focus. The school-based Collaborative Action Team process uses a three-dimensional, integrated approach: Team Building, Team Planning, and Momentum Generation. These three dimensions are designed to empower members to share leadership and become a collaborative, cohesive team while developing and implementing a plan for making productive changes in the school community. This paper looks at the impact of inclusive team training on the development of shared leadership in home, school, and community partnerships, the importance of having trained local facilitators for shared leadership roles, and the importance of having materials and tools that can guide facilitators and team members in the development of Collaborative Action Teams.

Shared Leadership in Collaborative Action Teams

Leadership is a key ingredient in any organization or group. As is true for a number of aspects of collaborative work, the issue of leadership presents somewhat of a double bind. Wolf and Foster (1995) state that collaboratives need "a clearly identified leadership structure, but also need to disperse leadership as broadly as possible." (p. 3) Other sources discuss the need for competent and effective leadership while also recommending shared leadership approaches (Melaville, Blank, & Asayesh, 1993). While these two factors are not mutually exclusive, the difficulty of assuring competence increases as leadership is dispersed. This has been seen in some of SEDL's Collaborative Action Teams where the membership was composed primarily of

those not normally found in traditional leadership positions ...o had little experience in taking on leadership roles.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation (1995) emphasizes the "need for core leadership that can articulate the initiative, build necessary consensus, manage the change process, weather the storms, and continually refine and redesign the effort without losing the community's support." The Harwood Group (1998), in its assessment of learnings from Pew Partnership projects, argues for the need for strong core leadership. Based on interviews with project participants, the Harwood report concludes "that collaborations that are left leaderless—or are handed over to a nebulous and ill-defined group to lead—flounder" (p. 20).

Melaville and Blank (1991) suggest that, in the early stages of formation and planning, collaboratives may need a single leader whose vision can rally others to the effort, but that leadership can be more dispersed as the collaborative gains momentum. Along with other sources, they also recommend that core leaders nurture leadership capabilities in other group members (Miller, 1995; Wolff & Foster, 1995). Nowhere in the literature however, are there explicit guidelines for building such capacity or for making the transition from core to more broadly dispersed shared leadership. In light of these findings, SEDL developed shared leadership from the very beginning of the Collaborative Action Team process and instilled it in all participants. SEDL decided that one of the best ways to incorporate this principle into the CAT process was to include it as part of any training conducted for potential members from all four membership categories of school personnel, community representatives, parents, and students.

Collaborative Action Team Training

Strategies for building a collaborative's capacity to function effectively are not consistently addressed in the literature. Two processes are sometimes mentioned: building support among key constituencies, and—least often mentioned—training or other development to build the leadership, communication, decision making and other collaborative skills of members. Kagan (1991) indicates that part of the empowerment of collaborative group members takes place during the training process. The importance of such training in developing shared leadership was also demonstrated in SEDL's previous *Home, School and Community Partnership Project* (Molloy, et. al., 1995b). Therefore, the training of team members was one of the basic tenets of the Collaborative Action Team project from its inception. Two of the core principles of the Collaborative Action Team process are shared leadership and consensus decision-making. Shared leadership implies that all team members participate in making team decisions. The power to make decisions does not belong to any one individual or group. With shared leadership and responsibility, everyone on the team is a part of the solution.

Opportunities to develop shared leadership naturally emerge while creating a Collaborative Action Team. Filling numerous roles such as meeting facilitator, recorder, or coordinator and taking on duties that include meeting organization, developing resources, and disseminating information are all important to getting the team started. Capitalizing on these opportunities also helps generate and maintain a team's momentum. When members feel valued and included, a spirit of teamwork builds contagious enthusiasm for becoming a community of leaders who act together to improve results for students and their families.

In the first and second cohort of Collaborative Action Team sites, Start-Up Training was conducted for home, school, and community representatives. Students from secondary schools

were invited to participate in the Start-Up Training at the Cohort 3 sites. Even before this event, SEDL stressed the principle of shared leadership during a visit made to each site as part of the application process to become a Collaborative Action Team. SEDL encouraged representation from all four membership categories during the site visit and at the Start-Up Training to further emphasize from the beginning the significance of sharing leadership and responsibilities to ensure success of the team. The Collaborative Action Team Start-Up Training was designed to foster shared leadership skills to enable team members with diverse backgrounds and a wide range of skill levels and experience to participate as full partners with school leaders. The Start-Up Training also included an orientation session that focused on factors that impact partnership development, developing a site facilitation plan and designating local facilitators. Plans were also developed during this session for the first full meeting of the team. The experiential, interactive training activities focus on developing an increased awareness and understanding among team members of their differences and similarities so they will become more comfortable with each other and gain a better understanding of each other's strengths that could contribute to the team. One activity in particular asked each person to list things they were good at and these were posted on flip charts for everyone to see. These skills and strengths of team members were then matched with tasks that needed to be completed during an action planning activity. This demonstrated to members the value of shared responsibility and leadership and encouraged them to share their knowledge and skills to accomplish the identified goals of the activity. Positive and high rankings on participant evaluations of Start-Up Training have validated the value of these sessions for the successful launch of a new team. An agenda for the Start-Up Training and orientation sessions can be found in Appendix A.

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Training of team members also took place at annual Collaborative Action Team Training Institutes held each fall during the first four years of the project. Members from all four categories (students were added as a fourth category after the second year) are brought together for three days to share ideas, network with each other, and gain new knowledge and skills that can assist them in their efforts. Each year, the topic of shared leadership has been on the Institute agenda to provide members with the knowledge and skills for their leadership development. An example of this in found in Appendix B. A dialogue session was held at the 1999 CAT Training Institute on Meeting the Challenge of Shared Leadership. Each of the institutes has been a highlight for those attending and enables them to take the information they learned back to their sites.

Training of Facilitators

SEDL's review of the literature on issues in collaborative work indicates that leadership is primarily discussed in terms of a facilitative role (Mattesich & Monsey, 1992; Ohio Center for Action on Coalition Development, 1992). Hord (1992), in discussing school change strategies, describes the importance of "facilitative leaders who assume responsibility for effecting change". These are not necessarily "positional leaders" such as superintendents or principals but rather are "people who demonstrate functional leadership," who help to "create an atmosphere and culture for change" and who nurture both the vision and the tangible supports necessary for effective follow through (p. 88). Peirce and Johnson (1977) quote Bruce Adams, a Co-Project Director of the Kellogg Leadership Studies Project, as saying "building relationships and crossing boundaries are the essential community leadership skills of the next century" (p. 33). These were the types of leaders and leadership skills that SEDL sought to facilitate Collaborative Action Teams.

Most guides on collaboration are silent on whether to use an outside facilitator rather than drawing from the actual membership of the collaborative group. The strongest support for using an outside facilitator comes from Molloy, et. al. (1995c), who state that "the planning phase is a complex undertaking and is more likely to be effective when... partnerships involve a neutral facilitator" (p. 5). Other authors stress the need for neutrality and fairness (Mattesich & Monsey, 1992; Melaville & Blank, 1991). Because of funding limitations and a commitment to building local capacity for sustaining the work, SEDL decided not to hire outside facilitators for Collaborative Action Teams. The decision was made, therefore, to train volunteer members to act in the facilitator role and maintain their neutrality while serving in this role.

A major finding from SEDL's previous home-school-community project was the value of having a trained facilitator to address the diversity of team membership, diffuse highly charged emotions, and maneuver successfully through the team development process (Molloy, et. al., 1995c). SEDL staff functioned in the facilitator's role for the first cohort of five sites and informally encouraged team members to assume this role. However, most members had limited knowledge or skills to take on this key role. SEDL also realized that to expand the use of the CAT process to ever increasing numbers of schools with the limited staff it had, facilitation had to be a local team responsibility. A decision was made in 1998 to develop a curriculum to train members from each site to facilitate and to then go back to their teams and equip others to assume facilitation responsibilities. Asking those who were trained to train others encouraged additional shared leadership opportunities to expand member involvement in the team's work. In January 1999, at least two members from each first and second cohort of sites were selected and trained as facilitators. Members from the third cohort of sites received facilitator training in September 1999. The agenda for this training can be found in Appendix C. A refresher

workshop for Cohort 1 and 2 facilitators was also held prior to the October 1999 Training Institute to help them improve their skills and assess their progress. Facilitators continue to receive assistance to help them improve their skills and gain knowledge and experience. SEDL staff observes team meetings and provides feedback to facilitators. Facilitators will also participate in two-day workshops being held in the Spring and Fall of 2000.

The focus of the facilitator training has been twofold. The first was to thoroughly familiarize members who volunteered to take on the facilitator role with the different steps in the Collaborative Action Team process. This was accomplished by acquainting participants with the major elements of the process and conducting a case study activity that required participants to determine the most appropriate CAT process element that would address typical issues and situations teams face. The second focus was to teach various processes such as brainstorming, consensus building, force field analysis, use of affinity diagrams, and the use of T-charts. Each participant had the opportunity to facilitate either a group process technique or one of the workshop exercises under the observation and guidance of SEDL staff. While the initial facilitator training taught participants how to use group process techniques, they have not been able to train other team members as SEDL had hoped they would. The focus of the workshops in the year 2000 will be on training existing facilitators to train fellow team members in the use of the techniques taught in the SEDL training.

Resource Material Development

As SEDL researched the various models of collaboration and partnerships as a precursor to the Collaborative Action Team process design; it became evident that many existing collaborative groups utilize to some extent various manuals and handbooks that relate to the collaboration process. A review of manual and handbooks available revealed that most them

were general in nature and did not provide any detailed instruction on how to proceed through the various steps involved in developing a collaborative partnership. Crowson and Boyd (1996), noting the proliferation of guides to collaboration and service coordination conclude, "what the handbooks and guidelines and experiential evidence to date do not adequately provide are insights into 'deep structure' issues in cooperating institutions" (p. 139). Such "deep structure" issues often represent the most pervasive, deeply entrenched barriers to collaborative work. These include institutional inertia as a barrier to collaboration (Schorr, 1997), a lack of sufficient knowledge and skills of those involved in collaborative work (Melaville and Blank, 1991), and perceived differences in power, perspective and belief (Delpit, 1995; Wolff, 1995) which can lead to tensions, miscommunication, and competing agendas among members of a collaborative group as well as between the group and the community it seeks to serve. As staff from the Annie E. Casey Foundation (1995) point out,

> Unfortunately, there is no single group-work exercise that helps very different people work well together to do things, no magic technique that quickly enables diverse groups to collaborate in meaningful ways. Instead, we discovered that people who work hard together and in good faith on problems of enormous importance to the community can provide, in time, the impetus for taking risks, for talking about things more often not raised directly, and ultimately for building mutual respect. Further, we learned that a truly diverse array of local stakeholders must be involved early, and that this expectation must be communicated as early and as clearly and consistently as possible (pp. 4-5).

The approach taken by SEDL in the design of the Collaboration Action Team process was to develop multiple small group exercises and activities that would assist team members to become better acquainted with the collaborative process and with each other. The design of this process

also incorporated activities that would help them deal with many of the aforementioned "deep structure" issues.

SEDL's small group activities for team development along with an explanation of the collaborative action steps were documented in a detailed resource product. "*A Guide to Building Collaborative Action Teams in Schools and Communities* (SEDL, unpublished) was developed to assist facilitators and team members in accomplishing the 32 elements of the process. These elements were classified as either team planning or team building elements and each contained background information along with one or two activities that teams could use in their meetings to help them accomplish each element. After the three cohorts implemented these materials, SEDL learned that some of the material was couched in terminology that was difficult for the Collaborative Action Team members to use. The content was too academic and lengthy and as a consequence, teams were less likely to use the information or conduct the activities. Teams provided input to make the materials more practical and user friendly. SEDL is currently developing two sets of resource materials for publication. The first, a *Guide to Taking Collaborative Action in Schools and Communities* will provide background information on each element and a general overview about the process. The second, a *Took Kit for Building Collaborative Action Teams* will contain both team planning and team building activities. School communities can use these activities to work through the different elements in the process and to deal with the "deep structure" issues that so often put roadblocks and barriers in the path of collaborative efforts. Together these two publications will help teams develop a Collaborative Action Team and maintain a viable partnership that emphasizes shared leadership and shared responsibility among all members.

Shared leadership is an integral principle of SEDL's Collaborative Action Team process. However, the sharing of leadership and responsibilities among the home, school, community, and students continues to be a shift in paradigm that can be difficult for school communities. In order to bring about shared leadership and sustain it in school-based collaborations, members need to be specifically trained on this principle and other core principles of the collaborative process. Inclusive training of team members on how to implement the Collaborative Action Team process and the use of resource material developed for this purpose will influence the sustainability of shared leadership in school communities. More specifically, training local members of the school community as team facilitators will enhance shared leadership to sustain the collaborative efforts toward school improvement.

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APENDIX A

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Site Start-Up Training for Developing a Collaborative Action Team at Geraldine Palmer Elementary/ Cesar Chavez Elementary
Pharr, TX
October 14-15, 1999

The Site Start-Up Training consists of a seven hour training the first day for all members of the Collaborative Action Team and a two and one half -hour training session the following day for members of the team's Organizing Group.

Day One Goals

- Discuss process for developing a Collaborative Action Team (CAT)
- Identify and apply strategies for partnership development
- Identify members of CAT Organizing Group

Agenda for Day One

8:00 - 8:30	Sign Up & Smell the Coffee! (Continental Breakfast)
8:30 - 9:15	Welcome & Warm-Up Activity
9:15 - 9:45	Overview of SEDL and Collaborative Action Team Project
9:45 – 10:00	Where do we start? Self-Assessment
10:00 - 10:15	Break
10:15 - 11:45	Team Identification: Finding *A Common Issue*
11:45 - 12:45	On your mark… get set… LUNCH!!!
12:45 - 1:45	Team Mobilization: Planning *for Action*
1:45 - 2:10	Collaboration Energizer
2:10 – 3:00	Project Development: Celebrating *Strengths*
3:00 - 3:15	Break
3:15 - 3:50	Project Implementation: Evaluating *Success*
3:50 - 4:00	Closure & Training Evaluation

Site Start-Up Training for Developing a Collaborative Action Team at
Geraldine Palmer Elementary/ Cesar Chavez Elementary
Pharr, TX
October 14-15, 1999

Day Two Goals

- Develop an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of SEDL staff and the Organizing Group in the Collaborative Action Team development process
- Design the first official Collaborative Action Team meeting

Agenda for Day Two

8:00 - 8:30	Sign-Up and Continental Breakfast
8:30 - 8:45	Site Profile Overview
8:45 - 9:15	Factors that can Impact Partnership Development
9:15 – 9:30	Discussing a Site Facilitation Plan and the Resource Packet for Partnership Development
9:30 – 9:45	Break
9:45 - 10:30	Design First Official CAT Meeting
10:30 –10:45	Closure

APPENDIX B

Collaborative Action Team Institute
Dialogue Session--Meeting the Challenge of Shared Leadership

SESSION I (45 minutes)

Note to facilitator: In this dialogue session, you will be serving as a neutral facilitator. Therefore, you will not be a participant in the discussion. You may ask questions to clarify a statement someone has made or to get more information, but should not add your own opinion to the discussion.

Instructions to participants

The purpose of this session is to give you an opportunity to share your personal experiences and perspectives about leadership. Since personal experiences and perspectives often shape our ideas and beliefs, this session lays a foundation for future discussions. It will also set the tone for open, thoughtful discussion. During this session, you are grouped according to your primary role on the CAT (home, school, community, and students). Although some of you may play more than one role, please discuss these questions from your *primary* role. (Adapted from Study Circles Resource Center materials)

Before we start, I want to suggest a few ground rules for our discussion. If you have any you would like to add, please suggest them to the group.

Ground rules for discussion

B. Listen carefully to others. Try to really understand what they are saying and respond to it, especially when their ideas differ from your own. Try to avoid building your own arguments in your head while others are talking.

VI. Be open about changing your mind, this will help you really listen to others' views.

VII. When disagreement occurs, keep talking. Search for common concerns beneath the surface. Above all, be civil.

VIII. Speak your mind freely, but don't monopolize the conversation.

Are there any other ground rules you would like to add? *(If the group agrees, add the rule to the list.)* Now, let's begin. We are going to use several questions to guide our discussion. We may not have time for everyone to answer every question, but I encourage everyone to share their views. Please note that these questions are intended to cover the general topic of leadership, not just as it applies to your experiences on your CAT.

Note to facilitator: You may not have time for each person to answer all of these questions. They are meant as a guide for the conversation and you may adapt them as the discussion develops.

Question 1
In your opinion, what is leadership? What does it mean to be a leader?

Question 2
Has there ever been a time when you took on the role of a leader? What was that like?

Question 3
Who tends to take on leadership in your school community or on your CAT? Do the same people tend to be the leaders all the time? Are there people who rarely take on leadership? Why do you think that is?

Note to facilitator: Discussion should be wrapped up at 10:45 AM

Discussion Summary
According to the CAT model, shared leadership is a strategy through which all members of a group participate in making decisions. Roles and responsibilities are mutually agreed to and divided among all members of the group. In the next session, we will look at the issue of shared leadership and decision making in the school community. I would like to ask for two volunteers from this group to participate in the dialogue group for Session II. The rest of us will observe the dialogue and have time to share our comments or questions at the end. This is called a "fishbowl" dialogue group.

Note to facilitator: After volunteers have been selected, the whole group will go to their assigned room for Session II.

SESSION II (45 minutes)

Instructions to participants
This session provides an opportunity to consider some very different views about leadership and decision-making within a school community (a school community may be an individual school, a cluster of schools, or an entire school district--this varies between CAT sites). Each of the views is written in the voice of someone with a particular approach to decision-making. Don't feel that you or your group needs to choose one of the views. Rather, use them to start the discussion and to develop your own thinking about what is most important (Adapted from Study Circles Resource Center materials)

Instructions to the audience
While your role is primarily as an observer for this session, we will take a few minutes at the end to take your comments and questions. Let's begin:

Now, I'd like to ask a volunteer from our group to read each of the following views. After we have heard them all, we will begin our discussion.

Questions for discussion:
What personal experiences and beliefs do you think contributed to these views?

Of the views, is there one (or a combination) that best describes your perspective, and why? Are there other perspectives you would like to add?

As you listen to others' ideas, try to learn why they hold their views. What new insights or different ways of thinking do you gain from others?

What are the common ideas in your group about who should take leadership and how decisions should be made in your school community?

Discussion should be wrapped up at 11:30. SEDL staff will provide session summary

View 1--The best decisions include as many different perspectives as possible

Because the entire community is affected by decisions related to the schools, it is important to include people from all walks of life in the decision-making process. Everyone contributes a different perspective and if someone is missing you won't see the whole puzzle. Decisions shouldn't be made until everyone has had a chance to give their opinion. Although this may take a lot of time and effort, this is a truly democratic approach.

View 2--The families who receive the services are key decision-makers, because they are directly affected by decisions that are made.

According to this view, students and parents are the "consumers" of the schools' services and are the people most directly affected by decisions that are made. If parents aren't consulted directly, they "vote with their feet" anyway and schools lose students and revenue. Besides, who knows better what young people need than students and their parents? While others might be affected by school-related decisions, they are not the main stakeholders and shouldn't have as big an influence as the families.

View 3--It is important to be efficient when making decisions and carrying out plans.

If you really want to have a big impact, it's important to make decisions and carry out plans quickly and effectively. Trying to include "everyone" is unrealistic and requires a lot of resources and time that could be used in other areas. If people are really interested, they will get involved.

View 4--The people who are accountable for the results should be the ones to make the decisions.

While others may help set the goals for the school community, the school administration and staff are the ones who are held accountable for results. It is important to give them the flexibility to figure out how to implement programs and policies. Anyway, no one else really knows all of the issues that are involved in running a school and teaching classes. They have the professional expertise and knowledge to make good decisions for our children.

APPENDIX C

Collaborative Action Team Facilitator Training
September 28-29, 1999
Schedule of Training

Day One – Tuesday, September 28, 1999

8:00 - 8:30 a.m.	Registration and Continental Breakfast
8:30 - 8:40 a.m.	Welcome from SEDL and PREP
8:40 - 9:00 a.m.	Introduction Warm-up
9:00 - 10:00 a.m.	Overview of Training, Learning Objectives, CAT Process, Facilitator Roles, and Clarification of Participant Expectations
10:00 – 10:10 a.m.	Break
10:10 – 10:30 a.m.	Establish Workshop Ground Rules
10:30 - 11:00 a.m.	Do You See What I See? Role of perceptions in communication
11:00 – 11:45 a.m.	Effective Communication
11:45 - 1:15 p.m.	Lunch
1:15 - 1:45 p.m.	Organizing Your Collaborative Action Team
1:45 - 2:45 p.m.	Cultivating the Voice of Diversity
2:45 - 3:15 p.m.	Understanding the CAT Model and Process
3:15 - 3:30 p.m.	Break
3:30 - 5:00 p.m.	Understanding the CAT Model and Process

Day Two – Wednesday, September 29, 1999

8:00 - 8:30 a.m.	Continental Breakfast
8:30 - 10:30 a.m.	Taking our Pulse and Discussion of The Big Three Elements
10:30 - 10:45 a.m.	Break
10:45 - 11:30 a.m.	Facilitators as Change Agents
11:30 – 11:45 a.m.	Discussion of Facilitator Roles
11:45 - 12:45 p.m.	Lunch
12:45 - 1:35 a.m.	Identification of Local Issues and Development of Meeting Agendas
1:35 - 2:25 p.m.	Developing Action Plans to Address Issues
2:25 - 2:35 p.m.	Break
2:35 - 3:15 p.m.	Presentations by Small Groups
3:15 - 3:45 p.m.	Participants will address their CAT site's development and implementation issues and develop plans for working with their sites. PREP staff will work with their sites to coach and counsel facilitators. PREP staff will also explain how the work of the facilitators will be monitored and supported.
3:45 - 4:00 p.m.	Closure and Evaluation

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